DATE: January 26, 1995
CASE NO. 95-ERA-2

IN THE MATTER OF

GARY L. IRICK,

COMPLAINANT,

v.

ARIZONA PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY/
ARIZONA NUCLEAR POWER PROJECT,

RESPONDENT.

BEFORE: THE SECRETARY OF LABOR

FINAL ORDER APPROVING SETTLEMENT
AND DISMISSING COMPLAINT

This case arises under the employee protection provision of the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974 (ERA), as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 5851 (1988 and Supp. IV 1992). The parties submitted a Joint Motion for Approval of Settlement Agreement and Dismissal with Prejudice seeking approval of the settlement and dismissal of the complaint. The Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) issued a decision on November 30, 1994 recommending that the settlement be approved. The request for approval is based on an agreement entered into by the parties, therefore, I must review it to determine whether the terms are a fair, adequate and reasonable settlement of the complaint. 42 U.S.C. § 5851(b)(2)(A) (1988). *Macktal v. Secretary of Labor*, 923 F.2d 1150, 1153-54 (5th Cir. 1991); *Thompson v. U.S. Dep't of Labor*, 885 F.2d 551, 556 (9th Cir. 1989); *Fuchko and Yunker v. Georgia Power Co.*, Case Nos. 89-ERA-9, 89-ERA-10, Sec. Order, Mar. 23, 1989, slip op. at 1-2.

The agreement appears to encompass the settlement of matters arising under various laws, only one of which is the ERA. *See* Settlement Agreement ¶¶ 1.1, 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3. For the reasons

set forth in *Poulos v. Ambassador Fuel Oil Co., Inc.*, Case No. 86-CAA-1, Sec. Ord., Nov. 2, 1987, slip op. at 2, I have

limited my review of the agreement to determining whether its terms are a fair, adequate and reasonable settlement of the Complainant's allegations that the Respondent violated the ERA.

Paragraph 3 contains language which provides that the parties and their attorneys shall keep the terms of the Settlement Agreement confidential except to the extent necessary to obtain financial or legal advice, or as otherwise required by law. The parties' submissions, including the agreement, become part of the record of the case and are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552 (1988). FOIA requires Federal agencies to disclose requested records unless they are exempt from disclosure under the Act. [1] *See Debose v. Carolina Power & Light Co.*, Case No. 92-ERA-14, Ord. Disapproving Settlement and Remanding Case, Feb. 7, 1994, slip op. at 2-3 and cases there cited.

Additionally, Paragraph 6 provides that the laws of Arizona shall govern this agreement. This provision is interpreted as not limiting the authority of the Secretary or the United States district court under the applicable statutes and regulations.

I find that the agreement, as here construed, is a fair, adequate and reasonable settlement of the complaint. Accordingly, I APPROVE the agreement and DISMISS THE COMPLAINT WITH PREJUDICE. *See* ¶ 1.1.

SO ORDERED.

ROBERT B. REICH
Secretary of Labor

Washington, D.C.

[ENDNOTES]

[1] Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 70.26(b), submitters may designate specific information as confidential commercial information to be handled as provided in the regulations. When FOIA requests are received for such information, the Department of Labor will notify the submitter promptly, 29 C.F.R. § 70.26(c); the submitter will be given a reasonable amount of time to state its objections to disclosure, 29 C.F.R. § 70.26(e); and the submitter will be notified if a decision is made to disclose the information, 29 C.F.R. § 70.26(f). If the information is withheld and a suit is filed by the requester to compel disclosure, the submitter will be notified, 29 C.F.R. §70.26(h).